

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 CAB-09 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 DOTE-00 L-03

SPC-03 SY-10 DRC-01 /088 W
----- 065051

R 071448Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY BERN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8493

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL ZURICH

AMCONSUL MONTREAL

UNCLAS BERN 4957

MONTREAL FOR US REP ICAO

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, SZ

SUBJECT: CIVAIR - SWISSAIR DC-8 HIJACKING ON DECEMBER 1

REF: STATE 238113

1. FOLLOWING INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM PRESS REPORTS.
SWISSAIR FLIGHT 254 (ZURICH-GENEVA-ABIDJAN-MONROVIA)
DECEMBER 1 WAS MAKING APPROACH FOR SCHEDULED LANDING GENEVA
WHEN 18 YEAR OLD SWISS GERMAN-SPEAKING MALE ENTERED AIRCRAFT
COCKPIT. SWISSAIR REGULATIONS REQUIRE COCKPIT DOOR BE OPEN
DURING LANDINGS. YOUTH, ARMED WITH .25 CALIBRE SEMI-
AUTOMATIC PISTOL, ORDERED PILOT TO LAND AND REFUEL FOR
FLIGHT TO NEW YORK. AIRCRAFT LANDED GENEVA/COINTRIN
AIRPORT AT 1325 HOURS AND GENEVA POLICE CORDONED OFF
AIRCRAFT AT END OF RUNWAY.

2. IN DISCUSSION WITH PILOT, YOUTH MADE ADDITIONAL DEMAND
THAT UNITED NATIONS CONTRIBUTE FIFTY MILLION DOLLARS TO
HELP HUNGRY PEOPLE IN AFRICA. PILOT CONTINUED TRYING TO
TALK YOUTH OUT OF GOING TO NEW YORK AND TO RELEASE PASSENGERS.
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AT 1450 HOURS 160 PASSENGERS AND CREW DISEMBARKED LEAVING

HIJACKER, PILOT, AND THREE OTHER CREW MEMBERS ABOARD. YOUTH THEN SAID HE WANTED TO MEET WITH PRESS, PARTICULARLY PHOTOGRAPHERS. AT 1620 POLICE OFFICERS POSING AS NEWSPAPERMEN BOARDED AIRCRAFT AND PERSUADED YOUTH TO GIVE UP WEAPON. HIJACKER, WHO PRESS REPORT IS NAMED DANIEL MARKUS BUHOLZER, TAKEN FOR PSYCHIATRIC EXAMINATION. WITH NEW CREW, AIRCRAFT DEPARTED FOR ABIDJAN AT 1710 HOURS.

3. SWISS NORMALLY VERY STRICT IN CARRYING OUT PRE-DEPARTURE PASSENGER SCREENING AND SWISS PRESS HAS RAISED QUESTION OF HOW HIJACKER GOT PISTOL ABOARD. CHIEF ZURICH POLICE DEFENDED THE EFFICIENCY OF ZURICH AIRPORT'S SECURITY CHECKS.

4. EMBOFF MADE ORAL REQUEST TO SWISS FEDERAL AIR OFFICE FOR CONFIRMATION OF ABOVE INFORMATION AND FOR DETAILS ON PASSENGER SCREENING. AIR OFFICE ASKED THAT REQUEST FOR INFORMATION BE MADE IN WRITING. LETTER SENT DECEMBER 7 AND COPY OF REPLY WILL BE SENT TO DEPARTMENT FOR FAA WHEN RECEIVED.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition History: n/a
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30 JUN 2005

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